

# **GREENACRE,**

OR THE

## **EDGEWARE-ROAD MURDER.**

*Presenting an Authentic and Circumstantial Account of this*

**MOST SANGUINARY OUTRAGE**

**OF THE LAWS OF HUMANITY ;**

AND SHOWING, UPON THE

**CONFESSION OF THE GULPBIT,**

THE MEANS HE RESORTED TO, IN ORDER TO EFFECT

**HIS BLOODY PURPOSE ;**

*Also his Artful and Fiendlike Method of Mutilating his*

**MURDERED VICTIM,**

The Inhuman Manner in which he afterwards Disposed of

**THE MANGLED BODY AND LIMBS,**

AND HIS COLD-BLOODED DISPOSAL OF

*The Head of the Unfortunate Female,*

ON THE EVE OF THEIR INTENDED MARRIAGE ;

*With a full Account of the Facts which led to the*

**DISCOVERY OF THE ATROCIOUS DEED ;**

**HIS APPREHENSION, TRIAL, AND EXECUTION.**

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WRITTEN BY C. J. WILLIAMS.

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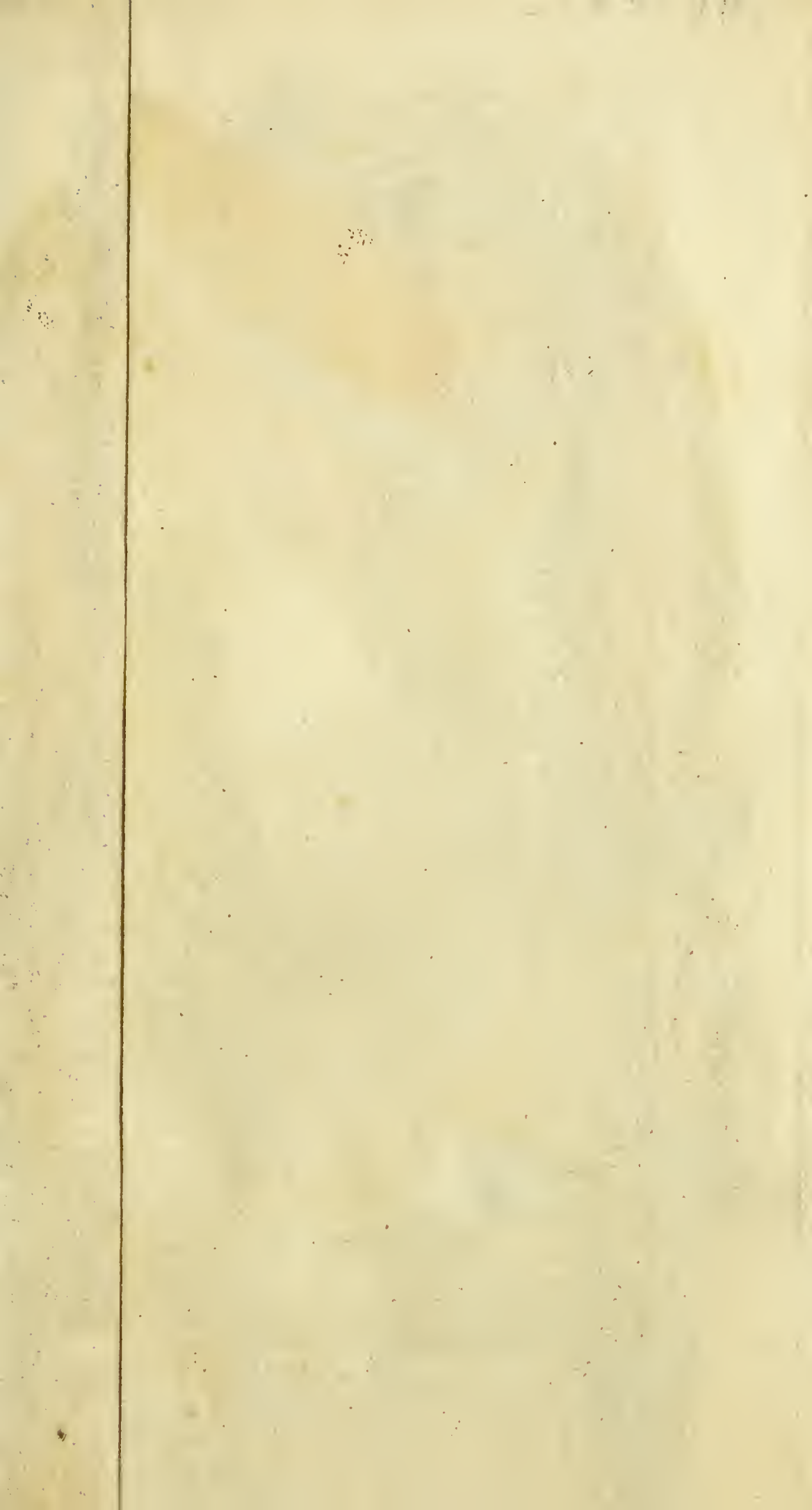
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HAPPILY for the welfare of the whole human family, the crime of homicide seldom is allowed to go undetected or unpunished, however craftily devised, however secretly perpetrated. That All-seeing Eye which never sleepeth, and whose omniscience cannot be evaded, rarely fails to pursue the offender until a dreadful doom overtakes and overwhelms him.

It is a maxim which has obtained the universal sanction of mankind, that "He who sheddeth the blood of his fellow man, by man also shall his blood be demanded:" indeed, one of the first principles which induced men to form themselves into tribes and communities, appears to have been the desire of securing inviolate from the hand of the assassin, that most precious of all things—life. And accordingly the murderer, when brought to that fate which the laws, both human and divine, affix on his crime, he perishes without the commiseration of his fellow creatures, while the enormity of the offence excites in all deep and lasting execration.

The criminal who has steeped his hand in the blood of his fellow man, will be generally found among those who have allowed themselves to be governed by the passions, among the most powerful of which are jealousy, anger, and avarice: to the inordinate sway of the latter is to be attributed the revolting offence, which has rendered notorious in the list of murderers the name of James Greenacre, the subject of the present memoir.

This individual was born about three miles from Lynn, in Norfolk. Of his conduct while young, we have not obtained any accurate information; but it appears to be highly probable, that he was discreet and assiduous; for at the age of nineteen he left his native roof, and went to London. His parents, who were respectable, had several sons, the whole of whom were bred to agricultural pursuits, except James, who had probably been brought up in some general shop of business; for, soon after his arrival in town, his father, who doubtless had a high opinion of his talents for business, advanced the sum necessary to set him up in trade; and he accordingly took a shop in the borough of Southwark, and opened in the grocery line. Here, for many years, his conduct was so correct, that it proved his father had formed a just estimate of his capabilities; for he became a respectable tradesman, and in



course of time he was appointed overseer of the parish of St. George, a mark of confidence which the parishioners would not have bestowed on him, had he not previously exhibited great proofs of talent and integrity. At an early part of his career he formed a matrimonial alliance with a young lady, the daughter of Mr. Ware, the respectable landlord of the Crown-and-Anchor Tavern, Woolwich ; with her he obtained a handsome marriage portion, and during her life it appears he behaved in every respect as a kind and indulgent husband ; and when it pleased that Almighty Power, whose decrees cannot be avoided, to visit her with an infectious disease, so sincere was his affection, that, contrary to the advice of the gentlemen of the faculty who attended her, he, with all a husband's love, continued his attentions until her dissolution, and caught the fever, which had nearly cost him his life. His grief for the loss of his amiable wife was but of brief duration, for he in a short time succeeded in winning the heart of Miss Romford : this lady, after becoming the mother of seven children, two only of whom are living, died, and he again became a widower. He, however, soon became again a successful suitor ; and he a third time entered into matrimony with an accomplished female with a good property : she brought him two children. This female was the daughter of Mr. Simmons of Long-Lane, Bermondsey. During the whole time in which the above circumstances took place, he lived in the same shop, and carried on an extensive business ; and ultimately became possessed of an handsome property, and was the owner of thirteen houses of that description called cottages or tenements, situate in the neighbourhood of the Kent Road and the Camberwell Road. But however prosperous he had been in his speculations, still there seems to have been a greediness of gain, a hankering after the accumulation of wealth, that ultimately proved his ruin. Not satisfied with treading in the respectable path of trade, by which he had arrived at wealth, and something approaching competency, by the fair and honest methods he had hitherto adopted ; he, in an evil hour, embarked in the base and scandalous scheme of selling a villanous compound of spurious tea. How long he carried on this disreputable trade is not known, but he was at length betrayed, and he came under the censure of the Board of Excise ; and the case having been clearly proved against him, he was fined in a very heavy penalty. He had now before him only two alternatives ; if he remained in England he ran the risk of losing the whole of his property, with the additional prospect of perpetual imprisonment, as



a crown debtor ; the only means of avoiding these evils was to emigrate to America. Accordingly having sold his interest in several of his houses, and leaving his wife in his shop, he with his youngest boy sailed, giving his wife to understand, that as soon as he had obtained an eligible settlement in America, he should send for her to join him ; however, before he had an opportunity of doing so, she fell a victim to that most dreadful scourge, the cholera morbus. Again a wifeless, yet not despairing mourner, he obtained an introduction to a respectable family ; and by his specious and insinuating manners, won the affections of an artless and too-confiding young girl, scarcely nineteen, who consented to become his wife. She did not long enjoy his society, for without the least notice, without even one parting kiss from his little unconscious boy, he quitted his wife and the poor little fellow in the street, as if for a short time, or as if he had to make some call on an affair of business ; and getting on board a packet that was on the point of sailing, he quitted the shores of America, and recrossed the Atlantic, and in a short time touched the shores of England, leaving his deluded young wife and unhappy child in a state of the most extreme wretchedness and penury. Had his evil actions terminated even here, it had been alone sufficient to stamp him with a villain's fame ; but this appears to have been one of the first only of a series of foul deeds which were to follow. In a short time after his departure from England he was made a bankrupt, and his creditors of course appropriated his stock-in-trade to the liquidation of his debts, which however do not appear to have been of great amount. By some means he had taken steps to secure a few of his houses, and on his return he took up his residence in one of them, situate in Carpenter's Buildings, Walworth Road ; here, although in the midst of persons to whom he was known, he continued until nearly the time of his apprehension.

Could it be possible, that because the wide Atlantic Ocean rolled its mighty waters between him and his wife and child, that he could, in a few weeks, shut them out from his remembrance ? Was there no voice of Nature within him, to tell of the anguish of those deserted in a distant land, to upbraid him with his want of a husband's and a father's feeling ? It appears not—his heart was not approachable to the pleadings of paternal love, it was callous to every generous feeling—he was a sensual and selfish wretch, with none of the sympathies that humanize mankind, and he knew no tie that could bind him to any member of society, unless his good-will was purchased by

the gratification of his passions or his desires ; in fact, in the midst of a busy world, a world abounding with the good gifts of Heaven, he was a voluntary outcast, existing by himself, and *for* himself alone.

He had not long remained a recluse, before he became acquainted with a female of very questionable reputation, her name was Sarah Farr ; but, like many whose frailty have caused them to fall into error, she had adopted another, that of Gale. She had already become the mother of a child born out of wedlock, and was in indigent circumstances ; but, although her name has become identified with that of her unprincipled companion, there is nothing known to place her among the utterly abandoned and thoroughly vicious.

It is acknowledged by Greenacre, in a document written by himself since his apprehension, and which purports to be a faithful outline of his life, that although he had not in any of his three first marriages made the acquirement of money a primary consideration, notwithstanding this, in those contracts he uniformly took care that there *should be property* to settle upon the children which might be the issue of the connexions. In this he acted with a foresight by no means blameable ; and had his subsequent conduct been regulated by views and actions not attributable to motives of a sordid nature, we should have acquitted him of a selfish acquisitiveness, which his subsequent conduct shows but too clearly was his ruling passion even in his earliest transactions.

Whether before his trip to the American shores, or after his return from thence, he became acquainted with a person named Ward, a cabinet-maker in Cheney Mews, near Tottenham-court Road, we have not the means of ascertaining, neither is it material to the present memoir ; certain it is, that he was upon the most intimate terms with Mr. Ward, frequently visiting him, and probably entertaining him in return at his own house. It was in the course of this friendly interchange of little kindnesses that he obtained an introduction to Mrs. Hannah Brown, who also was frequent in her visits to Mr. Ward's. She, like Greenacre, was a native of Norfolk, having been born within a short distance of Norwich. In the early part of her life she went to service, and lived in the family of Lord Woodehouse, but in what capacity we do not learn. Leaving that situation, she held several others in London, the last of which appears to have been in the family of Mr. Perrin, the celebrated batter in the Strand. Her maiden name was Gay ; but she had married, and had



been deserted by her husband, who, it seems, enlisted into the army ; and it is probable, that this circumstance induced her to seek a place in the metropolis. While continuing her acquaintance with Ward, she and Greenacre had frequent opportunities of seeing each other ; and, judging from the insinuating address of this man, who had enthralled the affections of four females already, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that she was quite alive to his attentions ; and an intimacy took place, which terminated in his proposals for a hymeneal alliance, which was acceded to on the part of Mrs. Brown, who, it appears, was greatly fascinated with his address, and probably considered the union to be very advantageous, as he was a man of property. On the other hand, he was the more eager to bring the negotiations to any early issue, as she was said to have accumulated a sum of money, amounting to four hundred pounds, in the different places she had filled ; and as she was a fine genteel woman, it is by no means improbable he thought the match would turn out very greatly to his interest, while he obtained a respectable woman for his wife.

But here let us pause a moment before we pursue the narrative further, and advert to a circumstance which in itself displays a damning proof of his total want of the feeling of humanity, which exhibits him as a reckless, heartless monster, a being divested of every attribute which dignifies the nature of man and pre-eminently ranks him above the brutes that perish.

The consequence of the woman Gale's illicit connexion, was the birth of an infant. This occurrence seems to have been considered by the wretch as an inroad on his selfish economy ; and he ultimately induced its mother to become a participator in a deed, at which the heart of a parent recoils with horror, and which, in moral guilt, is equal to the crime of murder. Taking advantage of the shades of night, they left it on the step of a door in Rupert Street, and made their escape. The owner of the house found the abandoned babe, and sent it to St. James's workhouse, where after a few months it died. Gracious heaven ! is there a crime in the too-numerous catalogue of misdeeds which spring from human depravity more odious than this ? How does the heart sicken at the thought of a woman, a mother, that most tender of relations, taking her infant from that warm fostering breast which Nature had provided for its comfort and its succour, and deliberately laying it at the door of a stranger, exposed to cold, want, ill-treatment, and every casualty from which a parent's

love would strive to guard her helpless offspring! Having already acted as he had done by his deluded young wife and son, we do not wonder at *his* conduct in this affair; but it is a matter of astonishment, that Gale could be induced to act thus cruelly; he must have held a potent sway over the mind and the affections of this woman, or she never could have submitted to cast away the tender feelings which Nature has implanted in the bosom of every mother, and which leads them through the smiles of Fortune and the perils and privations of Poverty, to cherish and guard their infants in their helplessness.

That he had acquired a power of this kind over her is evident, by her patient submission to his brutal determination, when he was about to marry the unhappy Mrs. Brown; for on that occasion he removed her from him with as little remorse as a slave-owner leads his bond-woman to the slave-market, and seems to have left her to shift for herself without a pang. His previous kindness had made her love him, his protection in the time of need had rendered her grateful; but it is scarcely probable, that a man so subtle, so completely an adept in duplicity, would allow her to become acquainted with his crimes; his knowledge of the world would naturally suggest to him, that if she knew the secrets of his career in guilt, that he would be arming her with a dangerous weapon, which, when he chose to discard her, she might wield against him: it is, therefore, probable, nay, even almost certain, that she had been kept in ignorance of his matrimonial connexion in America; nor is it likely that he would confide to her any secret which might at any time militate against his interest; much less was it probable, that by such a weak and needless confidence he would place himself in jeopardy, where he could derive no benefit, while he rendered himself liable to suffer for any act committed against the laws.

Mrs. Hannah Brown, at the time she became acquainted with Greenacre, was about forty-seven years of age, living in Union Street, at the back of Middlesex Hospital. She, on quitting servitude, had purchased a mangle, and being a powerful woman, and capable of great exertion, she obtained a respectable livelihood as a laundress. She was a person of good address, pleasing manners, and of sober and discreet habits, and very generally respected in the neighbourhood where she resided. She dressed well, and could afford at times to partake of the amusements with which London abounds; these things, however, excited no surprise, because she was a person who had saved a



handsome sum of money, independent of the weekly proceeds of her industry. It was at the close of the year 1836 that Greenacre proposed marriage and she consented to become his wife, and Christmas-day was fixed upon for the marriage ceremony. A short time previous to the appointed time, Mrs. Brown, accompanied by her husband elect, called upon an intimate friend of hers, and informed her and her family of their intention, and introduced Greenacre as her future husband; they were cordially received by the family, and congratulated upon the coming event; they afterwards staid to supper, and were invited to take their wedding dinner at their house. The name of the head of this hospitable family was Davis; he lived in Bartholomew Close, and carried on business as a cabinet-maker and broker. After a short time they called again on Mr. Davis, and, after sitting some time, Greenacre said, "Well, Mr. Davis, we may as well come to the point at once, we are not children; we have made up our minds to be married on Christmas-day; your daughter is to be bridesmaid, and you are to give the bride away; and since you were so kind as to invite us to take our wedding dinner with you, we accept your kind proposal." This being arranged, the females retired to converse in another room, and Mr. Davis and Greenacre adjourned to a neighbouring public-house, whence, after a short stay, they returned; and, shortly after, bidding their entertainers adieu, they went away together; Mr. Davis, however, accompanied them a short distance on the road toward Mrs. Brown's residence, and then returned home.

It had been agreed, as a preliminary step, that Mrs. Brown should sell her mangle and furniture, the proceeds of which Greenacre wished her to keep for pocket money, as he observed he had plenty of property, and was in no want of any part of it. She accordingly disposed of them, and on the afternoon of the day preceding Christmas, Greenacre drove up with a coach, and, after having helped the driver to place her trunks, &c. in the carriage, they both got in, and were driven to his residence in Carpenter's Place.

Preparatory to this, he had informed the unhappy woman Gale, that she must no longer remain with him. That wretched creature, having no choice but to submit, accordingly took a room at no great distance from the residence of her paramour, possibly with a promise of assistance on his part; she had, however, obtained occasional employment as a shoe-binder, and might in future have only to rely on that poor and precarious resource for a sub-

sistence for herself and child. Her lodging was in a small house in Portman Street, Walworth, into which she removed on the 22nd of December. Greenacre assisted in the removal of her furniture, and on the 23rd he called in the morning, bringing with him a bundle apparently containing a loaf, &c. On the following day, being the 24th, he again *visited her in the evening*. Her landlady described her as a quiet orderly woman, but disapproved of her conduct in sleeping out on the 26th, in consequence of which she gave her warning. She lived here but eleven days, Greenacre having slept with her two nights towards the end of that period, and, finally, she went back with her child to Carpenter's Place, Greenacre again assisting in the removal of her goods.

Mrs. Brown had appointed to sleep with a female friend the night previous to her marriage. This person, Mrs. Glass, living in Windmill Street, Tottenham-court Road, naturally expected her, but she came not, nor did she ever see her more. Rather late that night, near eleven o'clock, Greenacre called on Mrs. Davis, and asked if Mrs. Brown had called on her; on her replying in the negative, he stated that she had deceived him; that he had discovered that she was without property, which she had led him to believe she possessed, and that they, in consequence, had had some slight words; that she had abruptly left his house, and that the match was broken off. This was a matter of surprise to Mrs. Davis, as the next day her husband and daughter were to have met the parties at the Angel, near St. Giles's Church, where the marriage was to have been solemnized. Days passed away, and still Mrs. Brown did not call. This absence, strange as it appeared, Miss Davis attempted to account for by observing, the affair had turned out so foolishly, that she might feel ashamed to show herself. This excuse was adopted for some time by the family; and they concluded, that when her chagrin had worn off, she would resume her confidence, and renew her visits. It may not be here out of its place to observe, that at the time that Greenacre called, he was observed to be very much agitated, which Mrs. Davis attributed to his vexation and disappointment, which as it might be the natural result of his late quarrel on the eve of marriage, it appeared so far from being unusual in his situation, that it excited no particular observation; neither did his having a bundle under his arm appear singular, as he might have been providing for his Christmas dinner. But little did Mrs. Davis think what was the real cause of



his agitation, or imagine the horrid contents of the bundle which he carried with such apparent unconcern !

One of the most intimate acquaintances of Mrs. Brown, was a Mrs. Blanchard, who kept a broker's shop in Goodge Street, Tottenham-court Road ; and with her lived, as a sort of jobbing assistant, William Gay, the brother of Mrs. Brown ; but it appears that there existed a family misunderstanding between them, and that they had not been on speaking terms for some time ; yet, notwithstanding this feud, all brotherly feeling had not become quite extinguished. The singularity of the manner in which the wedding had been put aside, and the long discontinuance of Mrs. Brown's visits, were often the subject of remark ; but having business of their own to engross their attention, they left it to chance when she might feel inclined to renew the intercourse. William Gay was a married man, and the oddness of the affair might afford him and his spouse an occasional joke, and perhaps they had enjoyed many a hearty laugh at their relation's mischance "between the cup and the lip ;" but it was one of those every-day misadventures which create no very deep interest, and is only thought on for a moment, and then dismissed to make way for subjects of more importance.

On the 27th of December Greenacre called on this Mrs. Blanchard, as if to inquire whether she had heard of Mrs. Brown. He was asked to walk in, but excused himself, saying he was in a hurry. While conversing he said, Mrs. Brown had grossly imposed upon him ; and that he had discovered that she had endeavoured to obtain goods at a tally-shop in his name ; that she had no property, and that their marrying would have plunged both into a state of misery and ruin. While talking to Mrs. Blanchard at the shop door, Gay, who was unknown to Greenacre, came from below ; and on Mrs. Blanchard's introducing him as Mrs. Brown's brother, Greenacre seemed astounded, and changed countenance, when, bidding a hasty "good evening," he hurried away with great precipitation.

In the meantime, the long absence of Mrs. Brown from the whole circle of her friends began to excite serious apprehensions, and the Davis family felt uneasy at her mysterious disappearance ; and many inquiries were made concerning her, but without success.

On the Christmas-day which should have joined the fortunes of Greenacre and the missing female, he went to the lodging of Gale, about the usual hour of dinner, and partook of her humble repast, which consisted of about two pounds of scrag of mutton ; and this will have the ef-

fect of showing, that this visit was not preconcerted, and that she had no reason to expect him on that day : it is also clear from this circumstance, that when he warned her from his roof, that he was either too poor or too unprincipled to supply her with any sum of sufficient amount, to protect her against present or future indigence, or to recompense her for her past services : it appears also, that *he* had not preconcerted this visit, or he would have furnished Gale with the means of providing something more suited to the occasion than such a scanty and unseasonable meal. It is a striking fact, on the testimony of her landlady, that she had not been out any night from the 22nd to the 26th, on the night of which she slept from home, leaving her child locked up in the room till the next morning. On this occasion there can be little doubt that she went again to the unlawful bed of Greenacre.

On the 28th of December a circumstance took place, which excited an extraordinary sensation throughout the metropolis and its neighbourhood, in consequence of the discovery of a human body tied up in a sack, which was found near the Pine-apple Gate, Edgware Road. This discovery was made by a labouring man, who was passing by on his way to work. The sack was tied at the mouth ; curiosity led him to open it, and, on viewing its horrible contents, he immediately gave the alarm to a police-man, who came and carried it to the workhouse. A coroner's jury was summoned, and, after a minute investigation, a verdict of wilful murder was returned against some person or persons unknown ; and the parish, as well as his majesty's government, offered each a reward for the apprehension of the offender or offenders.

The utmost vigilance was exercised by the police in their endeavours to trace out the murderer ; but it continued to baffle their efforts, and it remained for some days without any fresh light thrown upon it. At length, on the 6th of January, as a barge was passing down the Regent's Canal, near Stepney, one of the eastern environs of London, the bargeman found that some substance obstructed him in his endeavours to close the lock gates ; he, therefore, acquainted the lock-keeper, who went with him, and with an implement called a hitcher, which is a long pole with a hook at the end of it, after several attempts, he succeeded in drawing up the substance, which, to his unspeakable horror, proved to be a human head. The jaw-bone had been dreadfully fractured, one of the eyes appeared to have been knocked out, and one of the ears was slit, as if an ear-ring had been torn out. Proper notice of



this circumstance was forwarded to the police, meanwhile the head was deposited in the bone-house. It was now very generally supposed, that it would prove to belong to the body found in Edgware Road, although at the distance of nearly five miles, and this conjecture proved to be correct.

The mutilated head was closely and scientifically examined by several surgeons : they ascertained that the eye had been knocked out, and not torn out ; there was also a wound in the cheek, but whether inflicted before or after death was rather uncertain ; it was supposed to have been the consequence of striking against some hard body during its passage down the canal. However, as yet, the perpetrators of this shocking crime continued to elude the vigilance of justice.

On the 2nd of February, as a young man, named Page, was working in an osier ground, near Cold-harbour Lane, Camberwell, he saw an old sack laying on the ground, having a hole in it, through which projected the knee of a human leg ; another man, who was engaged in the same employ, opened the sack, and they then saw the entire thighs, legs, and feet. Embarrassed as to what they ought to do, they called to a gentleman who was passing near them, but he did not regard them, and went on ; they called to another person, who advised them to take the sack to the station-house ; they, however, left it, and hastened to inform the police, and a party of those officers fetched it away, and conveyed it to Paddington, where the head was preserved in spirits, and the body remained deposited, until some unforeseen event might render it necessary to refer to them as a means of convicting the parties who had been guilty of such an atrocious deed.

These mutilated remains were carefully matched together, and no doubt existed of their being the dissevered parts of some unhappy being who had been horribly murdered ; but still the bloody transaction remained enveloped in darkness and mystery. At length one of those extraordinary impulses of the mind, which human reason cannot account for, and which shows, that in the discovery of murder the interference of an offended Deity is often conspicuously manifested, tended to fix the eye of suspicion upon the true author of the hellish deed. From the first discovery of the trunk, and pending those discoveries which followed, Mrs. Gay felt an unusually strong presentiment, that the mutilated body was that of her husband's sister ; and so strong at length did this impression become, that she would not be satisfied until he consented

to go to view the head, which had been carefully preserved in spirits, in order that it might at some time be identified. William Gay accordingly went to see the head, and in a moment recognised the features of his sister. Mr. and Mrs. Davis, and other friends of the unfortunate victim, repaired to see it, and were satisfied as to its identity.

On whom could suspicion fall so justly as upon Greenacre? His conduct was reviewed by those who best knew the particulars of his connexion with Mrs. Brown, and his behaviour had borne an appearance so equivocal, that they became satisfied that he was the guilty individual. On the 26th of March, a warrant for his apprehension was placed in the hands of Feltham, a police-officer, who had shown himself laudibly active in this affair; and, after some trouble and research, he learned that he lived in St. Alban's Street, Lambeth Road. He, attended by another policeman, proceeded there, and having obtained admittance, was told by the landlord, that the person he sought lived in the parlour. He, accordingly, knocked at the door, and called "Greenacre!"—"Well, what do you want?" answered he.—"I want to speak with you," said Feltham.—"Wait till I find the tinder-box," replied Greenacre, and was heard to get out of bed and walk about the room. The officer, not choosing to run any risk by delay, applied his hand to the latch, and the door opened; when he told him that he had a warrant to apprehend him, on a charge of murdering Mrs. Hannah Brown.—"I know no Hannah Brown," said Greenacre.—"What!" said Feltham, "were you never asked in church with Hannah Brown?"—He now acknowledged such to have been the case, but added, "What right have you to ask me such questions? you have no right to do so."—"I shall ask you no more," replied the officer, "but you are my prisoner, and must go with me." As soon as a light was brought in, the officer perceived a woman in the bed: "What woman is that?" inquired he.—"She is a woman that I have to sleep with me," said Greenacre. At that moment he observed that she had something in her hand, which she was attempting to conceal: "What have you in your hand?" said he; "give it to me, and dress yourself, for you are my prisoner also." She then handed him a watch, and seeing on her fingers two rings, he took them from her, also her pockets, in which he found a pair of ear-drops and a duplicate. A coach being sent for, the woman said she had a child sleeping in the next room, and she could not go away without it; she was allowed to fetch it; and all being in readiness for going, Greenacre



requested to have a great-coat, which Feltham gave him from a trunk that was in the same room. They then got into the carriage, and were driven to the station-house at Paddington.

The gradual manner in which this diabolical deed had been brought to light, had excited in the public mind a deeply-rooted interest, while it raised a moral and honest indignation ; and, therefore, when it was first rumoured, that the author of the atrocious deed had been discovered, an immense multitude assembled to see the delinquent, and they gave vent to their indignation by the only means in their power. When his examination was to take place, thousands of people were congregated, to obtain a view of the man who had thus signalized himself among the list of the most sanguinary murderers. But the object of their curiosity had determined to disappoint their eager desire to see him ; for, when left in his cell, he made an attempt to defeat the ends of justice : fastening his neck-handkerchief and pocket-handkerchief together, and making a slip-knot around his neck at one end, and fastening the other end to his foot, he had nearly completed the process of strangulation, when the attention of one of the policemen was attracted by an unusual noise issuing from the cell in which he was confined, and, on opening the door, he was discovered in a state of complete insensibility, and to all appearance dead. A surgeon, Mr. Girdwood, was sent for, who resorted to every means for his resuscitation, which, after a considerable time, proved successful. On his recovery he said to that gentleman, " I don't thank you for this—I had rather have gone off." This incident in itself exhibits a mind of no ordinary stamp, and leads us to imagine, that in an emergency he would shrink from no deed that would administer to the completion of any purpose that he meditated to effect, however violent might be the means necessary to its attainment.

After partaking of some breakfast, the prisoners were taken in a coach from the station-house to the police-office, High-Street, Mary-le-bone, the whole of the line of road being thronged with spectators, who assailed the prisoners with shouts and yells the whole way.

On being placed at the bar before the magistrates, Greenacre appeared firm but thoughtful ; he betrayed no visible emotion, and gazed around on the persons assembled in the court ; then placed his elbow on the iron railing, and leant his cheek upon his hand, and in this attitude he remained during the examination. Sarah Gale, who appears to have been about thirty years of age, was

placed beside him ; she was genteelly attired, and had with her her little girl, apparently about seven years old. Gale did not exhibit much concern at the awful situation in which she stood. She seemed to have been a handsome young woman, but adversity had made visible inroads on her former charms; her appearance created a very lively interest; indeed she seemed to be an object of greater curiosity than the male culprit.

After a long and minute investigation they were remanded for another examination. Mr. Rawlinson, addressing the prisoner Greenacre (the woman having been removed from the bar to the passage) told him that he was about to be remanded for re-examination, but that he might say any thing now or not, just as he thought proper ; whatever he did say would be taken down by the clerk.—Greenacre, in a clear voice, spoke to the following effect: “There are many direct falsehoods in the evidence. I had no serious quarrel with Mrs. Brown; having found that she had imposed on me, I merely spoke my mind to her on the subject; there might have been deception on both sides; it is true that I helped to move her boxes, but this woman (Gale) knew nothing of the matter; I gave her notice to leave previous to Mrs. Brown’s coming. Mrs. Brown came, on Christmas-eve, to my house, rather fresh from drinking; she asked for rum, I gave her some in her tea; we reproached each other; she was very aggravating; meanwhile she was rocking herself backwards and forwards in her chair, and as I resolve to adhere to the truth, I own that I tilted the chair with my foot, and she fell with her head against a clump of wood, and appeared insensible; I shook her, and tried to restore her, but she was quite gone. I was quite alarmed at what I had done, and, in this state of agitation and excitement, I resolved to conceal the body, in order to prevent being suspected of having killed her, and unfortunately determined to resort to the means which have been described. This female I exonerate from any knowledge of the transaction; she was absent from the house.”

On their way to the prison the crowd repeated the same manifestations of indignant feeling, and it was with great difficulty that the police force prevented the multitude from wreaking their vengeance on them on the spot. This conduct, to which a London mob are too apt to give way, is very unlike true English generosity, and resembles, in no slight degree, the late exhibitions of Lynch law, which the British press has so strongly and so justly deprecated in the inhabitants of some parts of America. It is a maxim



in England, that every man is presumed to be innocent until a jury of his countrymen has pronounced him to be guilty, and it would be more creditable to act upon the principle which this maxim inculcates.

On the following Saturday they were again examined, when their guilt being satisfactorily established, they were finally committed to take their trial at the Old Bailey.

During the interval of imprisonment Gale was excessively depressed and wretched. Her health visibly declined, and she was, in consequence, placed in the infirmary. Her conduct was strictly correct, but she maintained a great degree of reserve. Greenacre's firmness was extraordinary, and he still adhered to his account of the horrible transaction.

The grand jury having found a true bill against both the prisoners, they were, on the 22nd of April, arraigned at the Old Bailey, Greenacre for the wilful murder of Hannah Brown, and Sarah Gale with being accessory after the fact. A long and connected chain of evidence was produced, proving that Greenacre had agreed to marry the said Hannah Brown; that he had fetched her from her residence, with her boxes and other property; that he had called on a friend of the said Hannah Brown, and stated, that, in consequence of a disagreement, the marriage would not take place, that she had left his house abruptly, and that he did not know whither she had gone; that he had been intimate with a person named Ward, a mangle maker, to whose premises he had access; and that it was at the house of the said Ward he had become first acquainted with Mrs. Brown; that she had appointed to sleep with a female friend on the night preceding the intended marriage, and that she had not made her appearance at the time specified; several witnesses deposed to their having, at different times, and in places far distant from each other, found the body, legs and thighs, and the head of a human being; that these mutilated parts, when joined and compared, were the disunited parts of one and the same individual; that the head having been on its discovery carefully preserved in spirits, was identified by William Gay, the brother of Hannah Brown, as being the head of that unfortunate woman, and his testimony was corroborated by several other witnesses. It was also given in evidence, that the body was found tied up in a sack, which sack was proved to have been the property of Mr. Ward; that it was usually deposited in a part of his premises which led to his workshop, and that Greenacre in his visits, which had been frequent, to Ward, could without observation

have carried it away with him ; that the said sack contained several fragments of shavings or scrapings of mahogany, such as were made in the course of business by Ward ; and further, that it contained some pieces of linen cloth, which had been patched with nankeen ; that this linen cloth matched exactly with a frock which was found on Greenacre's premises, and which belonged to the female prisoner. Feltham, a police-officer, deposed, that on the 25th of March he apprehended the prisoners at the lodgings of Greenacre ; that on searching the trowsers pockets of that person, he took therefrom a pawnbroker's duplicate for two silk gowns, and from the fingers of the female prisoner two rings, and also a similar duplicate for two veils, and an old-fashioned silver watch, which she was endeavouring to conceal ; and it was further proved, that these articles were pledged by the prisoners, and that they had been the property of the deceased woman.—Two surgeons were examined, whose evidence was most important, and whose depositions were of the greatest consequence in throwing a clear light on the manner in which the female, Hannah Brown, met with her death. Mr. Birtwhistle deposed, that he had carefully examined the head ; that the right eye had been knocked out by a blow inflicted while the person was living ; there was also a cut on the cheek, and the jaw was fractured, these two last wounds were, in his opinion, produced after death ; there was also a bruise on the head, which had occurred after death ; the head had been separated by cutting, and the *bone sawed nearly through*, and then broken off ; there were the marks of a saw, which fitted with a saw which was found in Greenacre's box. Mr. Girdwood, a surgeon, very minutely and skilfully described the appearances presented on the head, and showed incontestibly, that the head had been severed from the body *while the person was yet alive* ; that this was proved by the retraction, or drawing back, of the muscles at the parts where they were separated by the knife, and further, by the blood-vessels being empty, the body was drained of blood. This part of the evidence produced a thrill of horror throughout the court, but Greenacre remained quite unmoved.

After a most impressive and impartial summing up by the learned Judge, the jury retired, and, after an absence of a quarter of an hour, returned into court, and pronounced a verdict of "Guilty" against both the prisoners.

The prisoners heard the verdict without evincing the least emotion, or the slightest change of countenance. After an awful silence of a few minutes the Lord Chief



Justice said they might retire, as they would be remanded until the end of the session.

They were then conducted from the bar, and on their going down the steps, the unfortunate female prisoner was seen to kiss Greenacre with every mark of tenderness and affection.

The crowd outside the court on this day was even greater than on either of the preceding; and when the result of the trial was made known in the street, a sudden and general shout succeeded, and continued huzzas were heard for several minutes. In an age which boasts of the march of mind, and the rapid growth of refined feeling, surely such an exhibition of brutal triumph will be wondered at, and deprecated by every man of reflection and real good feeling.

After the return of the prisoners to Newgate, Greenacre exhibited his usual equanimity and firmness: he asked for materials for writing, and, with great composure, wrote several sheets of paper full; but, as if not satisfied with what he had written, tore up the manuscript and threw it into the fire. His unhappy fellow convict evinced none of this fortitude, but fell into a deep melancholy, and became even more reserved than before.

On Wednesday, the 12th the court having sat again, and disposed of several important cases, the Recorder directed that Greenacre and Gale should be placed at the bar, and the male prisoner was brought into the dock.—Mr. Payne, one of the prisoners' counsel, applied to have the sentence deferred, on account of an alleged inconsistency in the indictment upon which the convicts had been tried.—The Recorder replied, that the objections made had been argued before the higher authorities, and that they did not consider they were valid.

The clerk of the arraigns then called on Greenacre, in the usual form, demanding if he had any thing to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him according to law; no answer having been immediately returned, Sarah Gale was ordered to be placed at the bar.

The clerk of the arraigns demanded of her whether she had any thing to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon her. She remained silent.—The Recorder was then about to pass sentence upon the male prisoner, when he was interrupted by him.—The Recorder: "Have you any observation to offer to the court?"

Greenacre: "I have, my Lord.—My unhappy situation in this unfortunate affair has naturally given rise to the collection of abundance of evidence, such as I believe

might have been gathered together from any gin-shop. It stands to reason, it is not common sense to suppose, that I should have meditated the death of the woman, and much less that I should have carried it into effect for the sake of her property; for I might have had it all, if I had only have waited for it until the next day, when the marriage was to have taken place.

The Recorder reminded him that all this would have been very proper for his counsel to have pleaded before the jury; "but if there are any grounds for expecting the verdict to be set aside," added he, "it must be now through the Secretary of State."

Greenacre: "I next beg to state, that this woman Gale, (who was now standing by his side) as I am going to my grave, was innocent of all knowledge of the affair up to the moment of my being taken to the police-office, when I explained the circumstance in her presence. I invited her to come back; and she came and visited me again. I feel it a religious duty to exculpate her from all knowledge of this unfortunate affair."

The Recorder: "I have only to repeat to the female prisoner what I have already said to Greenacre, that the only way in which the sentence may be commuted must be by an application to the crown, through the Secretary of State." He then directed that a chair should be provided for Gale, while he passed sentence on the male prisoner, which was accordingly done, and she seated herself.

After a short pause, during which a dead and awful silence prevailed, and a most intense interest was manifested by every person in the court, the learned recorder, in the most feeling and impressive manner, told the prisoner, that a jury had found him guilty of one of the most heinous offences against all laws human and divine; and that, as every hope of mercy was vain on this side the grave, he hoped he would turn himself to the only fountain from whence mercy could flow; that he would humble himself before his God, and, by sincere penitence and supplication, seek for pardon through the blessed Redeemer, who had died for the salvation of sinners who were truly penitent; "the limits of time, and the brief span of life, are no obstacles to the guilty to make his peace with his Maker; I implore you, therefore, to reflect on the awful situation in which your crimes have placed you, and the dreadful and certain fate that awaits you. It remains only for me to pass the sentence which the law awards, which is, that you be taken hence to the prison from whence you came,



and from thence to the place of execution, and that you be there hanged by the neck until you be dead, and that your body be afterwards buried within the precincts of the said gaol, and may the Lord have mercy on your sinful soul !”

His Lordship was much affected while addressing the unhappy culprit, who was removed from the dock.

Gale then arose and advanced to the bar, when the Recorder thus addressed her : “ I will not aggravate the sufferings which you must now endure, with any observations calculated to increase the painful sensations which must at this moment agitate your heart ; but inasmuch as was suggested by the unhappy man who lately stood at your side, that you were free from all guilt in uniting yourself with him in his society, in sharing his bed, in comforting him under the circumstances of his offence ; as he has represented you to be ignorant of the dreadful transaction which has been the subject of investigation, I think it right to call your attention to the ear-rings found in your possession, as having been the property of the wretched woman slaughtered by the hands of the man with whom you were living ; and that you were possessed, in a room adjoining that of your fellow prisoner, of a box, proved to have belonged to the deceased, and of some other articles of her property. I cannot doubt that the verdict was conformable to the facts of the case. How far your attachment to him, and the consideration that the deed was done and could not be undone, could have induced you to rejoin his society, I cannot say ; but I am bound to pass the sentence of the law upon you ; and if there is any doubt of the propriety of the verdict, it may hereafter be considered in the proper quarter. The sentence is, that you, Sarah Gale, be transported beyond the seas, to such a place as his Majesty, by the advice of his privy council, shall direct, for the term of your natural life.” She then was led out by the gaoler.

During the Recorder’s address the countenance of both the prisoners betrayed not the slightest alteration. Greenacre was mute and motionless, except at one time, when he laid hold of an iron bar to which a lamp is fixed, and supported himself. At the conclusion he seemed absorbed in reflection, and appeared insensible to what was going on, when one of the gaolers touched him and motioned him to retire. In going down the steps he slightly staggered, but immediately recovered himself. The female prisoner displayed great firmness the whole time of the trial ; but

there was now a great alteration in the appearance of both, yet the change was most visible in Greenacre.

The Recorder made his report to his Majesty on Wednesday of the prisoners under sentence of death in Newgate, when James Greenacre was ordered for execution on Tuesday next, May the 2nd.

The Ordinary, as soon as the order for the execution of Greenacre was received at Newgate, went, accompanied by the Governor, to the room in which the prisoner was confined, for the purpose of communicating the result. Greenacre was writing at the table at which he had been sitting placidly most of the day. Upon seeing the Ordinary with a paper in his hand with the black seal attached, he rose from his seat, without appearing to be at all agitated or disturbed.—The Ordinary said, as is the custom on occasions of the kind, “The Recorder has made his report to the King, and I am sorry to inform you that it is unfavourable to you.”—Greenacre: “It cannot be helped. I am sacrificed through prejudice and falsehood.”—The Ordinary expressed a hope that Greenacre would occupy the short time he had to remain in this world in earnest and hearty prayer.—Greenacre: “Nothing but unwearied prayer will suit my condition. I have a confidence in the mercy of God, and will trust to that. I care not a pin for death, but I abhor the thought of going out of the world as a wilful murderer. I committed no murder.”—The Ordinary then handed a book of prayer to him, and called his attention most earnestly to it.—Greenacre cast his eyes over the book and said, “I can’t attend to these long prayers. I must look to inward prayer for relief. All prayers from the heart are short, as ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ Oh! I should think nothing of death, but for the horrible stigma on my name for ever!”—The Ordinary: “The blood of the unfortunate woman is upon your hands, for it was by your means she came to her death.”—Greenacre: “Yes, but it might as well be said, that I murdered her if a cart-wheel passed over her, and I afterwards committed the mutilation. I have fallen a sacrifice to prejudice and the press.”—He then showed some symptoms of agitation, and, returning thanks to the Ordinary for his humanity and attention, reseated himself, and resumed his pen.

Could it be supposed, that after making the above firm avowal of his innocence, Greenacre would at last have confessed his guilt? Yet such was the case. Now the torments of conscience, and the hopeless prospect of being saved, induced the wretched culprit to request an interview



with the sheriffs. Sir James Duke and his colleague immediately attended him. Greenacre then, in a firm voice, said, that matters having now come to the worst, it might perhaps be as well for him to acknowledge, that the statement he had previously made was false. He then related, that, after his arrival with his unfortunate victim at Carpenter's Buildings, on the 24th of December, a quarrel arose between them, respecting the property each had represented themselves to possess; when Mrs. Brown using strong language towards him for deceiving her, he became so exasperated, that he took up a piece of wood resembling the roller of a jack-towel, which happened to be at hand, and struck her violently on the right eye; she was stunned, but he prevented her falling by seizing her chair. He then placed a pail, which was standing in the room, near the chair, and holding her neck over it, he with a common table-knife cut her throat, and held her in that position till the blood had ceased to flow. He then sat himself down for a short time, for the purpose of considering what was best to be done; and at length determined to cut the head and limbs from the body, and conceal them in different places. When he called at Mr. Davis's, Bartholomew Close, he had the head concealed in a bag, under his arm; and he eventually dropped it into the Regent's Canal, near the Ben Jonson, at Stepney, where it was afterwards found by the lock-keeper.

With the exception of the cases of Governor Wall, Thistlewood, Fauntleroy, and a few others, there has not occurred a spectacle of this nature for many years, that has created such an absorbing interest as the present. Like the case of Wall, the crime of Greenacre has engendered the bitter resentment of society, whose better feelings he had so flagrantly outraged. It was not alone a wish that justice should have its due course, but the desire of vengeance which his malefactions had excited; and, actuated by this sentiment, thousands were seen, ere the sun had emerged from the horizon, directing their eager steps to the spot where an act of retributive justice was to terminate the career of one of the most sanguinary monsters that ever disgraced the name of man. Every suburb poured forth its legion, all anxious to mark his awful exit, as if they were about to witness a triumph over one who had rendered himself the common enemy of the whole human race. Long before the usual hour, the Old Bailey, and every street leading to it, was filled by a dense mass of people; and the windows of every house, from whence the fatal engine of death was visible, displayed



their crowded groups of spectators of both sexes; even the roofs of the houses adjoining, bore their share in the exhibition.

At half past seven the sheriff arrived in his carriage, and in a short time the press-yard was thronged with gentlemen who had been admitted by tickets. The unhappy convict was now led from his cell. When he arrived in the press-yard, his whole appearance portrayed the utmost misery and spirit-broken dejection; his countenance haggard, and his whole frame agitated; all that self-possession and fortitude which he displayed in the early part of his imprisonment, had utterly forsaken him, and had left him a victim of hopelessness and despair. He requested the executioner to give him as little pain as possible in the process of pinioning his arms and wrists; he uttered not a word in allusion to his crime; neither did he make any dying request, except that his spectacles might be given to Sarah Gale; he exhibited no sign of hope; he expressed no symptom of reconciliation with his offended God! When the venerable ordinary preceded him in the solemn procession through the vaulted passage to the fatal drop, he was so overcome and unmanned, that he could not support himself without the aid of the assistant executioner. At the moment he ascended the faithless floor, from which he was to be launched into eternity, the most terrific yells, groans, and cheers were vociferated by the immense multitude surrounding the place of execution. Greenacre bowed to the sheriff, and begged he might not be allowed to remain long in the concourse; and almost immediately the fatal bolt was withdrawn, and, without a struggle, he became a lifeless corse.—Thus ended the days of Greenacre, a man endowed with more than ordinary talents, respectably connected, and desirably placed in society; but a want of probity, an absolute dearth of principle, led him on from one crime to another, until at length he perpetrated the sanguinary deed which brought his career to an awful and disgraceful period, and which has enrolled his name among the most notorious of those who have expiated their crimes on the gallows.

After having been suspended the usual time, his body was cut down, and buried in a hole dug in one of the passages of the prison.



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